

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 05802 181325Z

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S E C R E T ATHENS 5802

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, MARR, GR

SUBJ: DEFMIN AVEROFF COMMENTS ON GREEK WITHDRAWAL
FROM NATO

REF: ATHENS 5705

1. AVEROFF TOLD ME LAST EVENING (AUGUST 17) THAT GREEK NATO WITHDRAWAL DECISION WAS FIRM. HE SAID THAT CARAMANLIS HAD SPOKEN TO HIM AGAIN EARLIER IN THE DAY TO STRESS THIS FACT. AVEROFF ALSO DISCLOSED THAT NATO SYG LUNS PLEAS FOR GREECE TO RETURN TO NATO HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN. AVEROFF FULLY RECOGNIZED THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE DISENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND SAID THAT GOG WOULD PROCEED SLOWLY. HE THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW FRENCH PATTERN OF DISENGAGEMENT BECAUSE OF BASIC DIFFICULTIES WITH TURKEY.

2. NATO DECISION, AVEROFF SAID, WAS USUSUALLY POPULAR WITH GREEK PUBLIC. EVEN MINISTERS LIKE HIMSELF, ALTHOUGH WITH GREAT REGRET, CONSIDERED THE STEP NECESSARY TO RELIEVE THE SENSE OF DEEP HUMILIATION BROUGHT ON BY THE CYPRUS CRISIS. HE BELIEVED CARAMANLIS HAD MARKEDLY STRENGTHENED HIS OWN POSITION IN THE COUNTRY BY THE DECISION.

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PAGE 02 ATHENS 05802 181325Z

3. AVEROFF SAID HE PLANNED TO ISSUE A CLARIFYING STATEMENT

ON AUGUST 19 REGARDING THE DISENGAGEMENT PROCESS. HE EXPLAINED THIS STATEMENT WOULD INDICATE THAT CERTAIN TECHNICAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL NOT BE TOUCHED. BY THIS HE SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE RESPECTED.

4. I MADE THE SAME POINT TO AVEROFF THAT I HAD MADE EARLIER IN THE DAY TO PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS - NAMELY, THAT NATO DECISION OF VITAL SIGNIFICANCE TO WEST. GREEKS SHOULD NOT FAIL TO SEE THE DAMAGE TO THEIR SECURITY AND THAT OF THE WEST MORE BROADLY IF GOG CARRIES THROUGH WITH THIS STEP.

5. AVEROFF AGREED THAT SOVIETS WOULD BE A MAJOR WINNER BUT REAFFIRMED THAT GOG SIMPLY HAD TO TAKE DECISION ON NATO TO COUNTER THE HUMILIATION GREEKS HAD SUFFERED. WHETHER IT WAS RATIONAL OR NOT WAS SECONDARY WITH THE GREEKS WHO IN SITUATION OF THIS KIND PUT REASON IN SECOND PLACE BEHIND HONOR. HE CITED GREEK RESISTANCE TO FASCISM IN 1940 AS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS GREEK CHARACTERISTIC.
TASCA

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS INSERTED PER S/S-O, MR.SARROS

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